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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET~~/NODIS/XGDS

DECLASSIFIED
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MA07-120 #8; State Review 3/11/04

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

BY del NARA DATE 9/5/08

PARTICIPANTS: President Ford
Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Secretary of State
Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs

DATE AND TIME: Monday, April 12, 1976
9:20 - 10:30 a.m.

PLACE: The Oval Office

President: That Safire article [attached] is the damedest thing I ever saw.

Kissinger: I want you to know I have no separate files of which there are no copies.

[Described what kinds of papers he had.]

Nessen should say the White House has and always has had all memcons and other official records in which I participated as Assistant to the President.

President: Why is Safire so vicious?

Kissinger: He thinks I was responsible for tapping him. [Described the NSC tapping process.] I didn't even know he was being tapped, as is the case with several others.

President: I thought it was a lousy article. He was stretching for something to say.

Well, how are things in Lebanon?

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SECRET - XGDS (3)
CLASSIFIED BY: HENRY A. KISSINGER

Kissinger: Quite well. We may walk through that mine field okay.

President: The leftists are really getting after the Syrians, aren't they?

Kissinger: Yes. The Syrian force is there to keep the pressure on the negotiating process. The Israelis have been very relaxed. Dinitz said yesterday that the Syrian force was reaching the limits of what was acceptable, but nothing more.

Our information is that the Soviets are urging restraint. We sent them a tough note. Egypt is urging restraint on Jumblatt.

The next danger is that the new President [of Lebanon] may ask for Syrian troops.

President: Because he won't have any forces to keep order?

Kissinger: Yes.

President: Aren't there any alternatives to the Syrians?

Kissinger: [Described the problems with all the other forces.]

President: Can't the Saiqa and PLA do it?

Kissinger: Maybe. That depends. But this could be a crisis point.

President: I didn't see Schlesinger on TV yesterday. The headline was about our dealings on military aid with the Chinese.

Kissinger: We are having no discussion of any kind with the Chinese about military assistance.

I told Schlesinger he should put his mind to what we could do if the Soviets jumped the Chinese. There was also some talk of a hot line and early warning system. This happened in '73. We talked about selling them an early warning system or we would do it and give them a readout. I talked to Schlesinger at the Gridiron. He said we hadn't put enough into Angola -- it was our fault.



President: Listen, if we hadn't done what we did in Angola, everyone would now be screaming that we let the Soviets take it because of detente.

Kissinger: I am going to Africa. I plan to take a strong stand for the blacks with respect to South Africa.

President: That is okay with me.

Kissinger: You will get some flak from the South on it. I will support repeat of the Byrd Amendment.

President: That is our position -- but it should be on its merits, not as an amendment on another bill.

Scowcroft: We got it removed from the Defense Program Authorization Bill.

Kissinger: I met with a panel of Wall Street Journal editors. I said Zumwalt never protested SALT. They said Schlesinger told them there were twelve protests from the JCS but he was asked from the White House not to forward them. I said that was a lie. [Described the III-X silo issue.]

Bitsios is coming this week. We plan to have an exchange of letters in which they ask about the Aegean and Cyprus and I answer. They are also asking for aid and they want the same amount as Turkey. That is impossible. This will cause us some problems with the Turks but it is manageable. [Discusses some details of the exchange of letters]

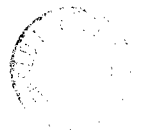
President: What about Clerides' resignation?

Kissinger: Those negotiations will be hard to get off the ground, because of the domestic situation of all the parties.

President: I saw a TV broadcast about Greek refugees. It was calculated to stimulate the Greeks.

Kissinger: Congress will like the Greek deal.

President: [Describes the AHEPA dinner -- moderate reception.]



Kissinger: I am meeting with Romulo. We are setting high standards for base negotiations. We offered them \$25 million a year, but they now will want much more.

You have the 200-mile sea bill before you.

President: You gave a speech on Law of the Sea last week.

Kissinger: It was well received. If we make it, this will be an historic achievement. The last one lasted 300 years.

President: How about the problems in the delegation?

Kissinger: We have a unified position. Learson is another Moynihan. Simon has been great to work with. [Discussion of the 200-mile bill.]

Scowcroft: McCloskey called me. He wants you to veto with a promise that you will welcome resubmission if adequate progress is not made during this negotiating session.

President: I will look at it carefully.

Scowcroft: [Discussed nature of his commitment to sign.]

Kissinger: I think you have to get Fred Dent under control. He is letting Congressional staff in all his meetings and has sent a letter to Long. [He reads the letter]. I think he has to walk the cat back. Fred behaves as if his loyalty is to the Finance Committee. If the Finance Committee gets away with it, all the other committees will want the same. This undermines the separation of powers.

President: Have you talked to Dent?

Kissinger: No. I will talk to him and if we can't solve it, we will come to you.

President: You talk to him.

Kissinger: Next is Elliott Richardson. He wants to go to China.

President: I thought I told him no.

Scowcroft: Not really. He wants to talk to you this week.



Kissinger: Richardson wants to negotiate textiles and claims and he wants to take Zarb with him on oil.

President: I will take care of Richardson.

Kissinger: Rogers. If he is a massive problem, we should drop it, but the delay won't make it easier.

[Some discussion.]

President: Will the Democrats and at least some Republicans support him?

Kissinger: All the Democrats will, and I think Case, Scott and Griffin at least.

President: Why don't you find that out? How about Goldwater?

Kissinger: I am going to Arizona with Goldwater on Friday. I will talk to Scott and Griffin first.

On my Arizona speech, I won't break any new ground. I will talk about optimism and pessimism in foreign policy -- saying it isn't optimism to keep the truth from the people.

[Discussion of Woodward and Bernstein book on Nixon.]



Mr. Ford's Cover-Up

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NYT
Apr 12
1975

By William Safire

Whoever, having the custody of any such record . . . willfully and unlawfully . . . removes . . . the same, shall be fined not more than \$2,000 or imprisoned not more than three years, or both; and shall forfeit his office. . . .
—18 U.S. Code 2071 (B)

When J. Edgar Hoover ran the F.B.I., he withheld certain highly sensitive files from the bureau's filing system; upon his death, those files were destroyed, frustrating law enforcement officials and historians.

When Henry Kissinger ran the National Security Council, he, too, withheld certain records from the council's computerized retrieval system. Some months ago, I reported that these "dead key scrolls"—typed transcripts of all his telephone conversations, taken down secretly by a secretary on a dead, or silent, extension—were no longer in the National Security Council, where they belonged, but had been taken over to the State Department.

Messrs. Woodward and Bernstein have added another wrinkle to that story: It seems that when these sensitive records were removed from the White House, they were first sent to the private vault of Nelson Rockefeller at his Pocantico, N.Y., estate. After a Federal attorney warned that boxes of top-secret documents could not lawfully be kept in a private home, the Secretary brought them back onto Federal property.

Here is some more information, which the White House refuses to direct the National Security Council or the State Department to confirm or deny:

1. Dr. Kissinger's "inner file," as Security Council staffers refer to the records withheld from the system, is not limited to telephone transcripts. Memoranda of conversations with the President and foreign officials like Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin are included, and in many cases, no other copies of the memos exist.

2. The assignment to withhold material from proper Security Council classification and filing was once one of David Young's functions; when that Kissinger aide went off to head the "plumbers," aides Jonathan Howe and Peter Rodman took over.

3. Individual briefcase-loads of this secret material were taken out of the White House to the Rockefeller estate in the early seventies; culminating in a big move of the remaining files in April, 1973. The Kissinger men will claim they were "protecting" the files from the Nixon men, but the files began disappearing from the White

House long before Watergate, and they have not yet been restored.

How come? The reason, I think, is that there is material in that "inner file" that Secretary Kissinger does not want anybody in the White House, the Department of Defense, the C.I.A. or certainly the Congress to see. There are certain meetings, particularly with Ambassador Dobrynin, that he wants to be able to expunge from the record. If he can control the "memcons," he can rewrite history.

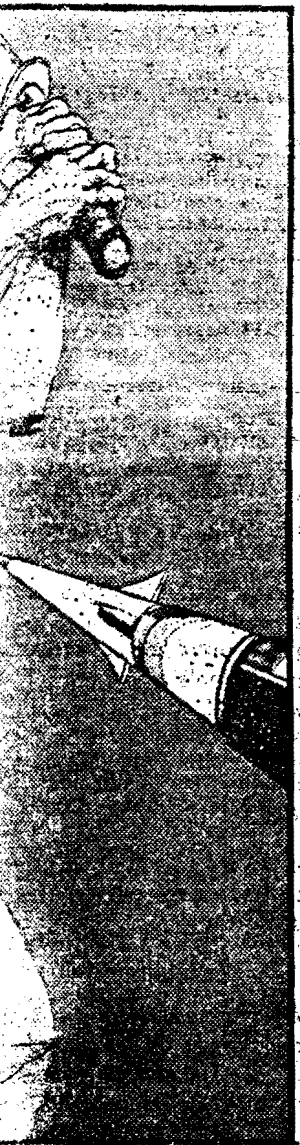
How does Nelson Rockefeller feel about his complicity in all this? "Henry's a friend," the Vice President told me. "I told him he could have the use of the vault." When? "I don't remember when." Did he just volunteer his vault, or did Henry ask? "I don't remember." Were six filing cabinets filled with secret records stored there? "There's been a small volume of papers stored there." Did he realize his personal vault was being used improperly to store official secrets? "Henry's a friend. I think he said something about papers from Harvard, I don't know anything about classified documents."

Could I see the man who runs his Pocantico vault, to see what was checked in and out, and who was permitted access to the documents? "No, you can't, that's private." And what of his taxpayer-paid aide, a young naval officer named—you guessed it—Jonathan Howe, the same Kissinger hand who operated the Pocantico underground railroad? "No, he's unavailable."

Here is the second highest ranking official in our Government, who was chosen by President Ford to head the commission to restore respect for law in our intelligence community. His home was used as the safe-house for the illegal concealment of the nation's secrets. His stonewalling answer to legitimate inquiry is that he cannot be held responsible because he did not want to know what was going on in his own home.

Behind the stone wall, I suspect, there is an important story—of conversations the public or at least key Government officials are entitled to know, and perhaps of records that have mysteriously disappeared.

President Ford, who ostentatiously offers F.B.I. help to Congress for plugging its leaks, has assigned nobody to look into this major breach of security. But it is Gerald Ford's Vice President who winks at the rule of law in handling intelligence; it is Gerald Ford's National Security Adviser who refuses all comment at an abuse of power he was surely aware of; it is Gerald Ford's Secretary of State who treats the nation's secrets as his personal secrets, and it is Gerald Ford's cover-up that must be exposed.



Marshall Arisman

and United States strategic

findings raise serious doubts . . . rampant triangularity in the . . . relations among China, the . . . States and the Soviet Union. . . accepted view that Peking . . . ate Washington and Moscow . . . approved. Indeed, the Chinese . . . suggests very much the con- . . . there are paths to great . . . that do not depend upon . . . structures for armaments. . . then, has done more than . . . acceptance of the prem- . . . nuclear deterrence. Unlike . . . American elites, its leaders . . . upon such assumptions. . . sible gains would accrue to . . . or it to depart from the . . . strategic course that now . . . so well?

D. Pollack is a research fellow . . . vard University program for . . . d international affairs.

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION
Presidential Libraries Withdrawal Sheet

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REASON FOR WITHDRAWAL National security restriction

TYPE OF MATERIAL Note

DESCRIPTION Brent Scowcroft's handwritten notes
from meeting with Ford and Kissinger

CREATION DATE 04/12/1976

VOLUME 4 pages

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